FNQROC Annual Report

2023/2024

Table of Contents

Chairs Foreword 3

Executive Officer 4

FNQROC Organisation Chart 5

FNQROC Strategic Economic Priorities 6

Operational Reports: 7

- **Natural Asset Management and Sustainability Coordinator** 7
  - **Natural Asset Management Technical Committee** 7
  - **Animal Management Technical Committee** 7
  - **Tropical North Queensland Regional Mountain Bike Strategy** 8
  - **Land Protection Fund and State Oversight Group** 8
  - **Disaster preparedness for natural assets** 9
  - **GBR and Water Quality Improvement** 9
- **Procurement Coordinator** 9
  - **Regional Procurement Arrangements** 10
  - **Regional Contract & Procurement Documentation** 12
  - **Procurement and Contract Management Training** 12
  - **Regional Procurement Advisory Committee** 12
- **Strategic Infrastructure Coordinator** 13
  - **FNQ Regional Roads and Transport Group (FNQ RRTG)** 13
  - **Regional Waste Management** 15
  - **Regional Water Alliance** 16
  - **Regional Development Manual** 17
- **Climate Resilience Coordinator:** 18
  - **Regional Greenhouse Gas Emissions Project** 18
  - **Regional Drought Resilience Plan: Gulf Hinterland & Wet Tropics** 18
  - **Disaster Preparedness Workshops** 19
  - **Community of Practice for Climate Resilience** 19

Unaudited Financial Statements 2023/24 20

A Snapshot of Federal Mayoral Delegation Visit 21

Acronyms Defined 25

VISION

Sustainable Economic Growth and Development for Far North Queensland

MISSION

Advocate on behalf of, and foster cooperation and resource sharing betwwen FNQROC member Council

STRATEGIC ECONOMIC GOALS

1. Develop resilient transport infrastructure and connectivity
2. Provide reliable and affordable water
3. Provide reliable and affordable energy
4. Respect and manage our natural assets and enviornment
5. Develop equitable social infrastructure
6. Provide equitable communication networks

Chairs Foreword

2023/2024 has been a big year for our region:

- Time only permitted us to have one Federal delegation but it was a good one with plenty of opportunities to meet with Ministers, Shadow Ministers and senate representatives.
- We all managed the consequences of Cyclone Jasper and Kirrily (just)
- Local government elections were held.
- We have a final draft of our FNQ Regional Mountain Bike Strategy.
- We have a final draft of our FNQ Water Capability Strategy.
- And most importantly, we commenced the FNQ Regional Plan review in partnership with the State.

The FNQ Regional Plan is crucial for the region, it needs to articulate our economic vision and put in place the actions from all three levels of government and private industries to achieve this. This Plan provides us with an opportunity to set our direction and work towards achieving it.

When you read through the rest of the operational report, it is quite amazing what a small team can achieve with the support of Council's technical officers so we can all benefit.

I would like to sincerely thank the outgoing Chair, Michael Kerr. He took on the role in 2020 as a new Mayor and has led the organisation with passion and a strong and justified belief that 'together we achieve more'. I would also like to thank Kelly Reaston and Nikki Huddy (Up North) and Mr Anthony Archie (as acting CEO) for their support while Ms Darlene Irvine took leave for a year. Anthony was thrown in the deep end and survived a quite difficult year.

Lastly, I would like to welcome Ieva Pradal (Procurement Coordinator) and Kelly Dean (Executive Support) to the team and thank Anthony Archie for his support over the last year.

Best wishes for this exciting next term.

Cr Angela Toppin

CHAIR

Executive Officer

I kept my promise and I am very excited to be back with FNQROC after taking one year of leave from August 2023. The time away has allowed me to bring back new ideas and perspectives into FNQROC.

I would like to thank Kelly Reaston and Nikki Huddy from UpNorth for their support while I was on leave to ensure our voice was heard in the development of the FNQ Regional Plan. I would also like to thank Anthony Archie who held the fort for me as CEO while I took this leave, his time in the organisation injected new idea's, experience and knowledge. It wouldn't have been easy for him either having to manage a local government election in the middle. We wish him all the very best going forward.

Operationally

Strategically our biggest focus this year was on the FNQ Regional Plan. The FNQROC Planning Advisory Committee met eight (8) times throughout the 2023/24 financial year. Meetings were very well attended by representatives from Councils, the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning (DSDILGP) and the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ).

The group's primary purpose is to provide a forum where the officers can discuss issues around the developing FNQ Regional Plan, planning legislation and state government policies, share information and resources amongst the group and ensure timely awareness of emerging issues and opportunities.

A draft plan is imminent.

It has been a busy year for the team, as you read through the AGM report, you'll see how much such a small team is doing with the support of technical officers from member councils and critical stakeholders. There are some significant collaborations occurring.

The team and I are very focused on what is in front of us and how we can support councils and prepare for this.

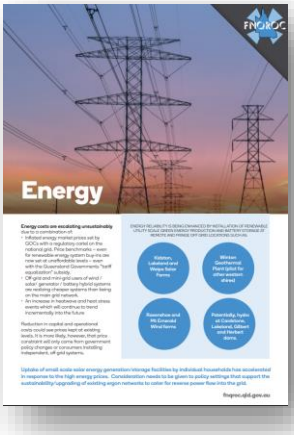
Darlene Irvine
CEO

FNQROC Organisation Chart

FNQROC Strategic Economic Priorities

The twelve Councils in Far North Queensland reviewed our Strategic economic priorities, focusing on understanding our opportunities, identifying our gaps and working collaboratively to support sustainable economic growth and development for Far North Queensland. Our advocacy efforts will be based on evidence.

The full transcript of the **FNQROC 6 Strategic Goals** can be located on the FNQROC website.



Operational Reports:

Natural Asset Management and Sustainability Coordinator

Program Overview

The natural asset management and sustainability role represents the interests of the FNQROC across the environmental and natural resources space including biosecurity (pests and weeds); water quality; the Great Barrier Reef and Wet Tropics World Heritage Areas; landscape repair & restoration; biodiversity conservation/planning and climate change actions relating directly to the portfolio

.

The role facilitates the Natural Asset Management Advisory Committee (NAMAC) and Animal Management Technical Committee (AMTC), which bring officers of member councils together with state agencies and external partners to progress shared regional goals and initiatives.

In 2022/23 the Board directed Tropical North Queensland Regional Mountain Bike Strategy review project required the establishment of the Regional Mountain Bike Strategy Steering Committee. The committee is comprised of Councils, mountain bike clubs and agencies with the primary purpose of guiding the delivery of the review which was finalised in July/August 2024. The committee has proposed to the Board that FNQROC continue to facilitate the committee to rollout the endorsed strategy for a period of 2 years. After this period a recommendation for future governance model will be provided for consideration.

The regional interests of the FNQROC are also represented through participation and support for councils in a wide range of local, regional, State and national advisory groups and committees. The role also incorporates spatial planning program communications using GIS across the other technical portfolios of FNQROC.

Alongside the NAMAC and the AMTC, the role works to deliver the FNQROC Animal Management & Wildlife Stewardship Policy, the FNQROC Natural Assets Stewardship Accord, FNQROC Regional Natural Asset Strategy, FNQROC Regional Animal Management Strategy; Regional Taskforce (Resource Sharing) MOU, and the Tropical North Queensland Regional Mountain Bike Strategy.

Natural Asset Management Technical Committee

The Natural Asset Management Advisory Committee (NAMAC) meets on a quarterly basis. The primary legislative driver of the committee is the Queensland *Biosecurity Act 2014*, but elements of the Queensland *Nature Conservation Act*, Vegetation Management Act Commonwealth *Environmental Protection Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act* and others also define the roles and responsibilities of councils the role supports. The NAMAC comprises representatives from member Councils, Terrain NRM, Cape York NRM, Gulf Savannah NRM, Wet Tropics Healthy Waterways and Biosecurity Queensland (QDAF).

Animal Management Technical Committee

The Animal Management Technical Committee (AMTC) meets quarterly. It brings together local laws officers and managers from across the region with Queensland Health (Tropical Health Unit), Biosecurity Queensland Animal Health, RSPCA and Queensland Police Service to partner on regional shared issues and programs. The committee's work supports councils in executing their responsibilities and services under the Animal Management (Dogs & Cats) Act 2008, Animal Care and Protection Act 2001, Biosecurity Act 2014 and the Local Government Act 2009.

Tropical North Queensland Regional Mountain Bike Strategy

The Regional Mountain Bike Strategy Steering Committee convened five times between July 2023 and July 2024 to review the 2015 strategy and develop the new strategy. Additional consultation for the strategy was provided through the hosting of information stands at two international mountain biking events; an online survey targeting local riders; a regional Mountain Bike Forum and attendance at two mountain biking industry conferences.

The Strategy guides the regional vision of Tropical North Queensland as a sustainable world-class mountain biking destination for our local communities and visitors alike. To deliver the vision, the region needs to grow its current trail offerings and modernise their management to remain competitive on the world stage and diversify our regional economies with a truly unique destination mountain bike experience.

FNQROC teamed up with Outdoors Queensland and Blue Sky Trails to deliver the Tropical North Queensland Mountain Bike Forum during Crankworx Cairns 2024

Land Protection Fund and State Oversight Group

The NAMAC is one of Queensland's 12 regional subcommittees that develop priorities and guide the delivery of the Land Protection Fund Co-investment model (formerly referred to as precept payments). FNQROC represents our regional sub-committee at the State Oversight Group (SOG). The primary role of the SOG is to assist in developing and determining investment of the Land Protection Fund in biosecurity research state-wide. Local governments contribute around $2.2m annually into the fund, which compliments the direct State investment of approx. $4m. Overall, the FNQROC sub-committee councils (excluding Croydon and Etheridge, which lie in the NWROC grouping) contribute just over $250,000 to the fund annually, so it is of crucial importance that we collaborate to ensure councils and communities are receiving value for money via targeted and required R&D.

Is the implementation of the Invasive Plants and Animals Research Prospectus. The prospectus provides a 5-year outlook of current research and projects that are shovel-ready when resources become available. The prospectus replaces an annual EOI process.

Feral and semi-owned/stray cats will be the focus of funding requests in 2025 in response to new evidence of impacts on biodiversity and health risks.

Into 2025 the NAMAC and the AMTC will be partnering to seek funding from the fund to research the impacts and management options for feral and peri-urban cats. This research proposal is in response to new technologies for feral cat control and the indentification of a much higher than previously considered feral cat population in the Wet Tropics rainforests.

Other key areas of focus are Neem tree in the western councils and a continuing focus on aquatic weeds in the regions waterways.

Disaster preparedness for natural assets

FNQROC has continued the collaboration with Terrain NRM and other regional partners in the delivery of new tools and approaches to managing the risk to natural assets during natural disasters and response. In October 2023 a secanrio planning exercise convened by FNQROC's natural assets and climate resilience coordinator provided councils with an opportunity to test their systems and response which are activated in natural disasters. A follow up exercise will be undertaken in the later half of 2024.

These programs and resources are important to assist operational teams prepare for unprecedented extreme weather events uch as those experienced in the wake of Tropical Cyclone Jasper and Kirrily in the summer of 2023/2024.

GBR and Water Quality Improvement

FNQROC and member councils continue to support the delivery of the Wet Tropics Waterways Partnership and Report Card. FNQROC is a member of the Partnership Group as well as the Technical Working Group, which provides advice on the interpretation and messaging behind the report card as managing and developing the indicators and metrics the annual report is based on. FNQROC and the Wet Tropics Waterways team are currently working with the whole of GBR Strategic Technical Working Group to undertake a full review of an aquatic weeds. The new indicator will be released the last half of 2024.

Aquatic weeds which have escaped from the aquarium trade like Amazon frogbit will be part of the focus of a revised water quality report card indicator FNQROC is developing with the Wet Tropics Waterways Partnership

Procurement Coordinator

Program Introduction

The Procurement Coordinator role has been in place since 2012 and is funded by the contributions of member Councils made on the following basis:

Cairns, Cassowary, Cook, Douglas, Mareeba and Tablelands contribute $25,000 annually; this amount is less than previously identified savings per Council.

The remaining Councils contribute 20% of savings made through their involvement in FNQROC procurement activities.

The FNQROC mandate for procurement is:

- Where there exists a limited supply for a product and/or service;
- Where member Councils are competing against each other for the same goods and/or services
- Where products or services could be scheduled to provide an improved service delivery
- Where member Councils would benefit from the sharing of knowledge and collaboration.

Collective procurement arrangements enable participating member Councils to achieve economies of scale on pricing and eliminate risk for individual Councils competing against one another for limited supplier resources. They often also involve a commitment from the supplier to ensure works are completed to agreed timeframes. Whilst there are several Councils involved in the collective procurement arrangements, each Council forms a contract with the supplier and the delivery of the contract is administered by FNQROC.

The FNQROC Contract Process Guide – Regional Procurement Contracts can be accessed via the Regional Procurement Portal .

Regional Procurement Arrangements

Regional Bitumen Reseal

Councils undertake an annual bitumen reseal program to maintain their road network to a suitable standard. This process is required to prevent moisture from penetrating through deteriorated bitumen seals into the underlying pavement, which causes damage such as rutting and potholes.

The annual Bitumen Reseal Program was successfully delivered again this year with four (4) member councils participating. The program involved sealing over 300,000 m^2 of road, which required approximately 650,000 liters of bitumen and total contract value was $2.2m.

The 2024/25 Bitumen Reseal Program is expected to cover approximately 630,000 m^2 of road and will require over 1 million litres of bitumen, and estimated contract value is $4.5m[1] . The program will be delivered across four (4) FNQROC member councils' shires.

Additionally, Councils involved in this arrangement benefit from appointing a qualified and experienced Program Coordinator to oversee the program's delivery.

Bitumen Resealing by fgf Bitumen crew

Regional Water Chemicals – Supply & Delivery

The contracts for the supply and delivery of Sodium Hypochlorite and Liquid Aluminum, the most used chemicals by both Water and Wastewater areas of councils, have been made under a collective procurement arrangement since 2012. The contracts for 2023/24 and beyond see arrangements that extend to the supply of Citric Acid, Aluminum Chloralhydrate and Liquid Sodium Hydroxide.

Eleven member councils continue to participate in this arrangement, which not only continues to offer good value for money but also the added benefit of centralised contracts management provided by FNQROC. In addition to this, FNQROC facilitates supplier and Council collaboration in areas including improving processes for the supply and use of particular water chemicals.

Collectively, councils used approximately 2.3 million litres of Sodium Hypochlorite, costing $1.35 million, and over 800,000 litres of Liquid Alum, costing $430,000, this year.

Collection & Disposal of Ferrous Metal & Used Lead Acid Batteries (ULABs)

This arrangement has been in place since 2015, involving eleven member councils. The

[1] Regional Bitumen Reseal Contract is schedule of rates contract and is subject to change as the sum of the products ascertained by multiplying the rates by the corresponding quantities in the price schedule.

arrangement intends that ferrous metal and ULAB (predominantly car battery) stockpiles are managed at acceptable levels and that Councils receive a fair and certain value for the materials.

The contracts are based on a supplier-led collection schedule with pricing linked to metal market fluctuations. In the financial year 2023/24, over 10,000 tonnes of ferrous metal, valued at $1.1 million, and over 350 tonnes of ULABs valued at $140,000, were collected across the region. Additionally, just over 160 tonnes of non-ferrous metal, valued at $290,000, were collected.

By working with all stakeholders, FNQROC strives for continuous improvement in all processes to add maximum value for participating Councils.

Stockpile of metal at Cassowary Coast Regional Council, South Mission Beach Waste Management Facility

Removal and Beneficial Reuse of Biosolids

Biosolids are treated sewerage sludge and the major by-product of the wastewater treatment process. They can be beneficially used for several purposes when treated and managed appropriately.

Many Council member Wastewater treatment plants produce biosolids that currently meet the stabilisation criteria required for beneficial reuse.

Arkwood is busy spreading nutrient rich biosolids onto farmland

The collective arrangement focuses on streamlined pricing and ensuring consistent contract terms are provided across the region to achieve efficiency benefits to suppliers and Councils alike. Six (6) member councils participated in this arrangement, below is a summary of collection volumes in the last two (2) financial years.

Traditionally, in wet weather when access to farms is not possible, Arkwood has taken biosolids to the Springmount Waste Management Facility to be beneficially reused as landfill cover. However, their operational model changed in FY 2023/24, and Arkwood has since secured wet weather disposal facilities at Shark Recyclers in Biboohra, Mareeba. As a result, the per-tonne rate has increased significantly due to the minimum biosolids collection volumes required by Shark Recyclers. However, the FNQROC team has been able to negotiate a 12-month contract extension, which has resulted in an overall cost increase of 19%, which is within reasonable expectations.

	2022/23	2023/24
Number of Councils	6	6
Annual Quantity (t)	35,573	35,251
Amount ($)	2,883,992	3,151,595

Figure 4 – Biosolids Collection Annual Comparison Summary

Regional Sewer Relining

Councils undertake annual in-situ sewer relining works to maintain their sewer

reticulation network. For the 4th year running, participating councils came together to deliver their programs under a collective procurement arrangement established by FNQROC.

The regional collaboration also means that we now have a much better understanding of our relining activities and the challenges faced in maintaining the sewer network. In addition, as a region, we now have some consistent data and are better placed to leverage emerging technologies and investment.

Works on sewers at night are sometimes required for high-flow sewers to minimise disruption to residents.

Regional Contract & Procurement Documentation

All FNQROC member councils continue to have access to a comprehensive suite of regionally consistent procurement and contract documents. The suites provide council officers with easy access to a range of documents that balance protection with the need for commerciality and practicality. The documents are intended to be fair and reasonable, in simple plain English and easy to understand.

The most recent Regional Contract and Procurement Document suite update included branded documents for twelve (12) member councils of FNQROC. The documents can be located via password on the FNQROC website via the Procurement Portal

Procurement and Contract Management Training

Seven (7) training workshops were delivered by Ochre Legal across the region in 2024. The workshops focused on Construction Contract Management and Goods & Services Procurement using the FNQROC /Ochre Legal suite of documents.

Ochre Legal team delivering Construction Contract Management training at Cassowary Coast Regional Council.

Regional Procurement Advisory Committee

The Regional Procurement Advisory Committee operate under the consistent objective of all FNQ Advisory Committees:

- Building & Maintaining Partnerships
- Sharing Information
- Identifying and/or facilitating training and skill development
- Identifying emerging and future issues and opportunities
- Advising FNQROC Board on policy and procedures
- Engaging external parties such as LGAQ, Local Buy, State & Federal Government, Suppliers etc.

This year FNQROC Procurement has been busy supporting both our member councils and various partners in raising knowledge and understanding of both procurement and contracts by delivering information sessions.

Strategic Infrastructure Coordinator

FNQ Regional Roads and Transport Group (FNQ RRTG)

Membership

- Cairns Regional Council
- Cassowary Coast Regional Council
- Cook Shire Council
- Croydon Shire Council
- Douglas Shire Council
- Etheridge Shire Council
- Mareeba Shire Council
- Tablelands Regional Council
- Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council
- Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council
- Department of Transport and Main Roads (Far North Region)

Positions

Table 1 - FNQ RRTG Executive

RRTG Chair	Cr Peter Scott (CSC) – to March 2024 Cr Barry Hughes (ESC) – from April to June 2024
RRTG Deputy Chair	Cr Ross Andrews (YASC) – to March 2024 Cr Kevin Davies (MSC) – from April to June 2024
Technical Committee Chair	David Fletcher (TRC)
Technical Coordinator	A Hancock (FNQROC)
RTAPT/LGAQ Representatives	Jarrod Hellmuth (LGAQ) Mike Furniss (LGAQ) Tanya Lindenberg (TMR) Susan Barlow (TMR)

Summary

The Roads and Transport Alliance is the formative cooperative arrangement between TMR and local government to invest in and regionally manage Queensland's Roads and transport network. The intent of the Alliance is to enable regional thinking and cooperation between neighbouring Local Governments. RRTGs work to collaboratively to regionally plan for and prioritise investment on road and transport infrastructure, including the allocating of the overall TIDS funding to the highest priority projects and identifying opportunities for financial efficiencies.

There is a requirement for each local government member to nominate one elected member as their delegate plus an alternative delegate should the nominate elected member be unable to attend. Teleconference facilities are provided at each meeting to enable representatives to attend via teleconference as opposed to in person, significantly reduce travel time and costs.

In 2023-24 the TIDS budget was just over $6M, which included the annual ATSI TIDS allocations for Wujal Wujal and Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Councils.

The 2023-24 TIDS program was delivered successfully, with just under 100% of project funds expended against 34 projects. This was despite the significant impacts to the road network experienced across the region in late 2023 and early 2024 and is a testament to the tenacity of our member councils.

Operational

Meetings

The FNQ RRTG Board met 3 times online and in Cairns in 2023-24, with any urgent action items managed between meetings via a flying minute.

The FNQ RRTG Technical Committee met 6 times in 2023-24 online and in Cairns.

FNQ RRTG LRRS Network

During 2023-24, there were no changes to the LRRS network.

Statewide Capability Development Funding

In addition to the annual TIDS allocation there is also funding available to member councils via the Statewide Capability Development Fund (SCDF). This fund supports improvements in road stewardship, capability and capacity with needs identified via a Capability Agreement and Action Plan. Projects that took place in 2023-14 which were supported by SCDF funding were as follows:

Aerodrome Operational Plans

In 2022-23, Leading Edge Aviation was engaged to undertake a Regional Aerodrome Operations Business Plan on behalf of participating councils with the intent of providing them with a baseline plan that ensures a consistent approach is applied to the management, maintenance and renewal of aerodromes across the Far North region over the next 10-20 years. This project was completed in 2023-24 with participating councils benefitting from the provision of both an individual and regional business plans to assist with the ongoing management and development of their Aerodrome Operations.

Aerodrome Safety Audits

Whilst not funded by the SCDF, following successful completion of regional aerodrome safety audits over the last couple of years, the FNQ RRTG TC requested annual safety audits continue to be undertaken regionally and in 2023-24 Aerodrome Design Services were engaged to complete audits for the next 3 years on behalf of participating councils.

Procurement & Contract Management Training

7 training workshops were delivered by Ochre Legal across the region in 2024. The workshops focused on Construction Contract Management and Goods & Services Procurement using the FNQROC /Ochre Legal suite of documents.

TIDS Project Management Tool

In late 2023 the RRTG endorsed the recommendation of the RRTG TC to engage Shepherd Services to develop a new TIDS Program Management Tool. This tool will replace the current MS Excel-based systems and aims to facilitate batter management, create efficiencies, and provide a robust audit trail for the TIDS program. It will be web-based database with GIS capabilities, tailored to the needs of both the RRTG and the RRTG TC. The development is currently under way and implementation of this exciting new tool is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

Technical Tour – Cook Shire Council

An important element of the RRTG TC activity is the annual technical tour which provides the technical committee with the opportunity to view TIDS projects across the region. In July 2023, the technical committee headed North to view projects undertaken by Cook Shire Council, together with sealed and unsealed sections of the Peninsular Development Road and the Archer River Bridge works being delivered by the Dept of Transport & Main Roads.

The objectives of the road trip were not only to view TIDS projects across Cook Shire Council's extensive region, but it was also an opportunity to share project experience and the innovative solutions to problems/sharing problems with a view to gaining additional ideas. The technical tour also helps the technical committee to understand the variations between council areas and the networks they support. Coastal councils are different to Cooktown which is different to the Cape. Representatives from both Transport & Main Roads (TMR) and Local Government Association Queensland (LGAQ) also attended the tour with Jarrod Hellmuth from LGAQ.

Regional Road and Transport Group Technical Tour, Coen Airport, Cook Shire Council, July 2023

Regional Waste Management

Summary

In June 2023 the FNQROC Board endorsed the FNQROC Regional Waste Resource Recovery Plan. This strategy, funded by the Department of Environment, Scient and Innovation (DESI), provides councils with a blueprint to help guide council investment decisions in infrastructure and non-infrastructure needs in our region. It outlines immediate, short, medium and long-term actions for councils to achieve beneficial outcomes. The eight (8) key actions identified in the Regional Resource Recovery Plan include:

1. Step-change in customer engagement through education and awareness
2. Optimising regional service arrangements by providing better servicing for rural and remote communities
3. New transfer station facilities, consolidation or transfer facilities and closure of existing rural landfills
4. Enhancing kerbside collection approaches to increase capture of co-mingled recyclables.
5. Maximising the diversion of organics from landfill
6. Optimising the regional network of resource recovery facilities through 'hub and spoke' arrangements.
7. Developing a centralised resource recovery precinct
8. Developing alternatives to landfill for residual waste

These key actions, if delivered, will work together to provide improved regional resource recovery and economic development outcomes for the region. However, significant funding will be required to deliver. Following endorsement of the Plan, our focus has therefore been on agreeing the terms of DESI funding for a Regional Waste Management Plan Coordinator to facilitate implementation as well as the governance framework and investment principles associated with future funding.

Operational

The Regional Waste Management Technical Committee met 3 times in 20023-24 with all meetings held online and in Cairns.

FNQROC also represented the region on the following committees/working groups:

Local Authority Waste Management Action Committee (LAWMAC)

LAWMAC is a NFP Incorporated Association representing the regional areas of Northern and Central Queensland comprising a membership of twenty-nine Local Government Councils and forty-nine Waste Industry Corporate Members dedicated to best practice waste management and resource recovery. LAWMAC aim to identify sustainable solutions through regional forums and interactive participation across the LAWMAC region whilst aiming towards a Circular Economy and Zero Waste by 2050. LAWMAC meetings are currently held quarterly.

LAWMAC, Rockhampton, November 2023

Organics Working Group

The Department of Environment, Science and Innovation, Office of Circular Economy (OCE), set up this working group primarily to agree where additional guidance is needed on the regulatory requirements for generating/handling, accepting and processing material from organics collection services in Queensland.

Regional Water Alliance

Summary

The water and wastewater sector faces complex challenges including ageing, issues attracting and retaining staff, competition from other industries (particularly resource industries), transitioning to new technologies such as AI and drones, and general skills and labour shortages. In late 2022 Queensland Treasury Corporation facilitated a workshop with the FNQROC Water Alliance, during which there was unanimous support to address the capability concerns as a collective.

Regional Water Capability Plan

The FNQ Water Capability Plan project commenced, and a four-step approach was agreed to understand the region's capability issues and enable councils to identify and implement agreed solutions.

Step One	Understanding 'on-the-ground' capability issues.
Step Two	Workshop to socialise findings and key themes.
Step Three	Options analysis
Step Four	Implementation of agreed solutions

To understand 'on-the-ground' capability, each member council completed two capability surveys. A single response to each survey was required from each Council.

Once the surveys had been completed, each Council attended a post-survey workshop facilitated by QTC to validate the survey results and gather further insights.

A summary of the key findings was then provided, and the Water Alliance selected three (3) initiatives to progress to options analysis which the FNQROC Board subsequently endorsed, People, Systems & Data, and Processes.

Stantec were engaged in January 2024 to undertake an Options Analysis and develop a Regional Water Capability Plan. The intent of the Plan is the development of a regional, long-term (up to 10 years) coordinated plan that identifies options and opportunities for FNQROC member councils to work individually and collaboratively to improve capability in the identified focus areas. This exciting project is supported by both Jobs Queensland and the Queensland Water and will be used to demonstrate required policy reform and any funding and assistance required from both levels of Government to reach the desired future state.

Stantec held a workshop with the Water Alliance with a focus on future state capability and then a further session focused on the development and agreement of a list of options to form the basis of the Plan. The Plan will be delivered by Stantec at the October FNQROC Board meeting.

Stantec Water Capabilty Plan Workshop, April 2023

Operational

The FNQ Water Alliance met 4 times in 2023-24, both online and in Cairns. These meetings are attended by councils, QLD Water, QLD Health, Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water and LGAQ.

FNQROC works closely with Queensland Water and supports the Queensland Water Regional Alliance Program (QWRAP) which is a partnership between Queensland Government, Queensland Water and local councils to deliver sustainable, safe, secure and reliable urban water and sewerage services to regional and remote communities.

In 2023-24 FNQROC also represented the region on the following committees/working groups:

qldwater Sewerage and Water Environmental Advisory Panel (SWEAP)

The **Sewerage and Water Environmental Advisory Panel** (SWEAP) is an expert group comprised of representatives from water service providers across Queensland. The group meets regularly to provide advice on environmental management and regulation and to foster collaboration on joint submissions to the Queensland Government on policy issues.

qldwater *Consortium for Research and Advocacy on Emerging Contaminants (qCRAC).*

Contaminants of emerging concern are an increasing issue for the local government water sector as community and regulator expectations increase and the ability to detect trace chemicals improves. Costs of dealing with contaminant issues will increase but can be mitigated through joint action and collaboration in national and international initiatives for research, policy and advocacy. In 2019, the qldwater Sewage and Water Environmental Advisory Panel recommended the formation of a Consortium to influence state and national policy, research and communications to lead future discussions about contaminants affecting Queensland Water and Sewerage Service Providers.

Biosolids

Biosolids are nutrient-rich organic material which is the by-product of the wastewater treatment process. The biosolids produced by participating member councils are currently beneficially reused via land application but changes to the current regulatory framework relating to the presence of emerging contaminants means this may soon no longer be a viable option. In response to the rapidly changing regulatory position, in 2023 a Regional Biosolids Sub-Committee was endorsed by the FNQ Water Alliance to develop a Regional Biosolids Strategy for 2024 – 2034. The first meeting took place in September 2023 which saw a Terms of Reference and Summary Report being developed detailing the issues and potential opportunities.

Whilst there are various gasification/pyrolysis trials underway across the State, a longer-term solution appears a way off and biosolids dewatering appear to be the best option for the region, at least in the short to medium term. This would potentially reduce biosolids volumes which would be of benefit given the expenses associated with transportation together with limited wet weather options across the region. FNQROC are therefore currently in the process of developing a scope for a biosolids dewatering and wet weather storage study.

Queensland Water Skills Forum, November 2023

Regional Development Manual

The FNQROC Regional Development Manual review commenced in 2022. The Development

Manual is reviewed every 2 years and purpose of the review is to ensure that the Development Manual continues to be functional and up to date and to provide a consistent set of standards across the region.

The process involves seeking proposed amendments from all interested parties which includes not only council officers but also consultants and contractors who carry out engineering works within, or for, local government areas.

The consultation process and adoption of amendments is conducting on behalf of member councils by FNQROC in accordance with the *Planning Act 2016.* Version 9 of the Development Manual was formally adopted by those councils in early 2024.

Climate Resilience Coordinator:

Collaborating to foster a low-carbon, climate-resilient future for our region, the Climate Resilience Technical Committee continues to drive action and advocacy in climate mitigation, adaptation, and transition. Together, we have contributed to the development and implementation of the following initiatives:

- Regional Drought Resilience Plan (Wet Tropics & Gulf Hinterland)
- Regional Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory
- Disaster Preparedness Workshops
- Rivers to Reef Climate Alliance Action Plan

Providing input on strategic direction for climate resilience in our region, we participated in twelve workshops, collaborating with state and national agencies on the development of:

- National Health and Climate Strategy
- National Climate Risk Assessment & Adaptation Plan
- Regional Biodiversity Disaster Management Plan

Regional Greenhouse Gas Emissions Project

As part of the Rivers to Reef Climate Action Plan 2021–2026, the Climate Resilience Technical Committee launched the Regional Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory project. The collective results from twelve local council inventories will form a regional snapshot of corporate emissions, supporting future advocacy and funding for regional mitigation initiatives.

A quarter of the way through the project, the collaboration has yielded positive results for local councils. Seven councils joined a collective tendering process, securing financial benefits and the opportunity to share resources for data collection.

Recognising a resource gap that hindered participation from Aboriginal Shire Councils—Hope Vale, Wujal Wujal, and Yarrabah—the Climate Resilience Technical Committee secured funding from the Great Barrier Reef Foundation to support their involvement.

The project is currently in the data collection phase, with five out of twelve councils having completed their inventories, and the remaining councils progressing with data collection.

Regional Drought Resilience Plan: Gulf Hinterland & Wet Tropics

Following research conducted last financial year, FNQROC, in collaboration with James Cook University, Terrain, and Gulf Savannah Natural Resource Management, submitted the final Regional Drought Resilience Plan for the Wet Tropics and Gulf Hinterland.

In developing the plans, two regional drought resilience forums were held, bringing together

over 120 stakeholders to identify pathways and actions for resilience while building cross-organisational networks. These plans reflect a collective commitment to addressing risks to the region's economy, infrastructure, culture, community, and natural environment.

Regional Drought Resilience Forum Wet Tropics & Gulf Hinterland 24 November 2023

Disaster Preparedness Workshops

In response to climate-driven events impacting government sectors, disaster preparedness workshops were delivered this financial year, focusing on workplace health and safety and natural asset management.

Findings from the "Keeping Our Cool" Heatwave Awareness project highlighted outdoor workers' vulnerability to heat-related health risks. In collaboration with the FNQROC Workplace Health and Safety Technical Committee, an online heatwave scenario workshop was held, allowing participants to test their response processes during a severe heatwave.

Additionally, an online disaster simulation—covering heatwaves, tropical cyclones, and floods—was conducted for Natural Asset and Disaster Management teams. This exercise enabled the testing of the Natural Assets Disaster Management Plan and helped identify challenges and opportunities for each council. The outcomes have contributed to the development of a regional biodiversity disaster management plan, led by Terrain Natural Resource Management.

Community of Practice for Climate Resilience

Supporting a collaborative community, FNQROC facilitated four Climate Resilience Technical Committee (CRTC) meetings with representatives from nineteen organisations, including eight local councils. To aid councils with limited resources, the CRTC Resource Library provides a centralised online platform for members to access resources on legislation, policies, tools, maps, grants, and tenders.

In the second half of the financial year, a series of natural disasters—including bushfires, heatwaves, tropical cyclones, and floods—affected all local government areas in the FNQROC region, impacting the economy, infrastructure, communities, and natural landscapes. The first Climate Resilience Technical Committee (CRTC) meeting for 2024 provided a platform for government and non-government organisations to share their experiences in preparing for and responding to these events. The meeting minutes, summarising discussions, challenges, and needs for future events, are available on the CRTC webpage.

Unaudited Financial Statements 2023/24

Balance Sheet

Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils 30241
As at 30 June 2024

	30 JUNE 2024
Assets	
Bank	
Cheque Account	106,575.26
FNQROC Savings	1,432,607.82
Total Bank	**1,539,183.08**
Current Assets	
Accounts Receivable	103,959.00
Total Current Assets	**103,959.00**
Total Assets	**1,643,142.08**
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	178,416.79
Accrued Expenses	5,800.00
ANZ Credit Card:FNQROC	9,623.65
GST	(23,688.51)
Payroll Liabilities	13,544.14
Payroll Liabilities:AL Payable Current	68,672.07
Payroll Liabilities:LSL Payable Current	12,517.00
Payroll Liabilities:LSL Payable Non-Current	68,753.00
Rounding	(0.20)
Total Current Liabilities	**333,637.94**
Total Liabilities	**333,637.94**
Net Assets	**1,309,504.14**
Equity	
Current Year Earnings	(181,313.60)
Opening Bal Equity	293,928.07
Retained Earnings	1,196,889.67
Total Equity	**1,309,504.14**

Profit and Loss

Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils 30241
For the year ended 30 June 2024

	2024
Trading Income	
FNQROC	
FNQROC: Annual Contribution	599,642.00
FNQROC: Miscellaneous: Staff Christmas Party	349.10
Total FNQROC	**599,991.10**
Regional Roads & Transport	
RRTG: Annual 2.75% contribution	163,817.97
RRTG: Funding/Subsidies	152,064.00
Total Regional Roads & Transport	**315,881.97**
Regional Procurement Group	
Regional Procurement: Annual Procurement Contribution	25,000.00
Total Regional Procurement Group	**25,000.00**
Water: Short Term Projects: QWrap Funding	50,000.00
Water: DESBT Water Services Agreement	30,000.00
Climate Resilience: Corporate Greenhouse Gas Inventories	41,985.00
Wet Tropics Bio Security Future	19,000.00
Climate Resilience: Resilience Program	27,000.00
Total Trading Income	**1,108,858.07**
Gross Profit	**1,108,858.07**
Other Income	
Interest Income	12,587.79
Total Other Income	**12,587.79**
Operating Expenses	
Audit & Accounting Fees	5,859.09
Bank Service Charges	317.94
FNQROC	
FNQROC: Subscription/membership	29,638.34
FNQROC: Chairs Honorarium	6,000.00
FNQROC: Mayoral delegations - accommodation, meals, travel expenses	3,508.78
FNQROC: External Meeting Expenses: Registration Fees	5,133.30
FNQROC: External Meeting Expenses: Travel, Accom & Meals	20,562.46
FNQROC: Internal Meeting Expenses: Miscellaneous	543.54
FNQROC: Internal Meeting Expenses: Catering	4,989.01
FNQROC: Staff Christmas Party	1,432.65
FNQROC: Mobile Phone Expenses	1,737.89
FNQROC: Salaries	266,641.80
FNQROC: Stationery & Office Expenses	5,395.30
FNQROC: Stationery & Office Expenses:Website	917.09
FNQROC: Training	3,890.91

	2024
FNQROC: Vehicle Expenses	20,882.99
FNQROC: Miscellaneous expenses	3,414.79
Total FNQROC	**374,688.85**
Infrastructure	
Infrastructure: Salaries	151,436.57
Infrastructure: Mobile Phone Expenses	625.84
Infrastructure: Subscriptions/membership	340.00
Total Infrastructure	**152,402.41**
Regional Roads & Transport	
RRTG: RRTG Management Tool	16,110.00
RRTG: External Meetings: Travel, Accom & Meals	12.84
RRTG: Internal Meeting Expenses: Catering	504.70
RRTG: Regional Road Trip	1,039.50
Total Regional Roads & Transport	**17,667.04**
Regional Urban Water	
Water: Internal Meeting Expenses: Catering	384.36
Water: External Meeting Expenses: Registration Fees	35.00
Total Regional Urban Water	**419.36**
Regional Waste & Recycling	
Waste: Internal Meeting Expenses: Catering	333.82
Total Regional Waste & Recycling	**333.82**
Regional Natural Asset Management	
Nat Asset: Vehicle Expense	5,933.70
Nat Asset: External Meetings: Registration Fees	3,174.63
Nat Asset: External Meetings: Travel, Accom & Meals	515.71
Nat Asset: Internal Meeting Expenses: Catering	1,204.20
Nat Asset: Mobile Phone Expenses	625.84
Nat Asset: Salaries	132,569.43
Nat Asset: Stationery & Office Expenses	2,133.18
Total Regional Natural Asset Management	**146,156.69**
Regional Planning & Economic Development	
Reg Planner/economic development: External Meetings: Travel, Accom & Meals	361.01
Reg Planner/economic development: Internal Meeting Expenses: Catering	805.91
Reg Planner/economic development: Mobile Phone Expenses	625.84
Reg Planner/economic development: Salaries	86,879.35
Total Regional Planning & Economic Development	**88,672.11**
Regional Procurement	
Regional Procurement: Bitumen Reseal Project:Project Coordinator Fees	43,600.00
Regional Procurement: Mobile Phone Expenses	625.85
Regional Procurement: Salaries	111,040.88
Total Regional Procurement	**155,266.73**
Regional Development Manual	

	2024
Regional Development Manual: Internal Meeting Expenses: Catering	64.13
Regional Development Manual: Legal Expenses	2,890.46
Regional Development Manual: Stationery & Office Expenses	1,592.91
Total Regional Development Manual	**4,547.50**
Asset Management	
Asset Management: Internal Meeting Expenses: Catering	363.64
Total Asset Management	**363.64**
FNQROC: Uniforms	226.00
Nat Asset: Miscellaneous	1,295.45
Nat Asset: Internal Meeting Expenses: Miscellaneous	91.64
Nat Asset: Subscription/membership fees	1,403.94
Payroll Expenses: On Costs - Annual Leave	30,271.59
Payroll Expenses: On Costs - Long Service Leave	(64,530.00)
Regional Development Manual: External Meetings: Travel, Accom & Meals	188.19
Regional Procurement: Bitumen Reseal Project	15,460.00
Waste: Waste Management Plan (2022)	18,795.00
Waste: External Meeting Expenses: Registration Fees	27.27
Waste: External Meeting Expenses: Travel, Accomm & Meals	2,084.93
Water: External Meeting Expenses: Travel, Accomm & Meals	2,457.48
Climate Resilience: Corporate GHG Inventory	(1,204.55)
FNQROC: Mayoral delegations	3,549.54
SCDF Project - Procurement and Contracts Training 2024	24,841.82
Climate Resilience: Climate Resilient Councils Program	114,069.96
Preparation of procurement and construction documents	20,386.36
Aerodrome Operational Business Plans	46,463.50
Reg Planner/economic development: FNQ Regional Plan consultant	66,670.00
FNQROC: Recruitment Services	8,825.00
Climate Resilience: Keeping Our Cool Project	1,036.36
Regional Procurement: Sewer Relining - Consultant Fees	(30,920.00)
Water: FNQROC Regional Water Capability Plan	94,574.80
Total Operating Expenses	**1,302,759.46**
Net Profit	**(181,313.60)**

Notes to P&L: $50,000 Water Capability Plan claim made in August 2023
$66,670 Paid in consultancy fees to cover CEO Annual leave
~ $55,000 in salary payments for Climate Resilience as per original motion from FNQROC Board to contribute 50% in 2023/34

A Snapshot of Federal Mayoral Delegation Visit

Federal Delegation 1-4 August 2022

Figure 16: ***Senator Malcolm Roberts, Queensland Senator***

Figure 17: ***Mr Tony Pasin,*** *Shadow Minister for Infrastructure*

Figure 18: ***The Hon David Littleproud MP*** *Shadow Minister for Agriculture*

Figure 19: ***The Hon Michael McCormack MP*** *Shadow Minister for International Development and the Pacific*

Figure 20: ***The Hon Warren Entsch MP*** *Member for Leichhardt*

Figure 21: ***Senator Perin Davey*** *Shadow Minister for Water & Waste, Shadow Minister for Emergency Management*

Figure 22: ***Senator Hollie Hughes,*** *Shadow Assistant Minister for Climate Change and Energy*

Figure 23: ***The Hon Catherine King*** *Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government*

Figure 24: ***Senator Murray Watt*** *Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Minister for Emergency Management*

Figure 25: ***Mr Bob Katter MP*** *Member for Kennedy*

Figure 26: ***Senator James McGrath****, Queensland*

Figure 27: ***The Hon Kirsty McBain*** *Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories*

*Figure 28: Meeting on behalf of the **Hon Julie Collins**, Minister for Housing, Minister for Homelessness, Minister for Small Business, **Mr James McLean Dreyfus**, Interim Advisor to the Minister.*

*Figure 29: The **Hon Madeleine King,** Minister for Resources, Minister for Northern Australia.*

*Figure 30: **The Hon Patrick Gorman**, Assistant Minsiter to the Prime Minister*

*Figure 31: **Senator Anthony Chisholm,** Assistant Minister for Education, Assistant Minister for Regional Development*

*Figure 32: **Senator Nita Green,** Senator for Queensland*

*Figure 33: **The Hon Linda Burney**, Minister for Indigenous Australians*

FNQROC Team Contact Information

Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils

PO Box 359, CAIRNS QLD 4870

P: 07 4044 3343

W: www.fnqroc.qld.gov.au

Darlene Irvine CEO	Kelly Dean Executive Support	Travis Sydes Natural Asset Management & Sustainability Coordinator
P: 07 4044 3038 **E:** ceo@fnqroc.qld.gov.au	**P:** 07 4044 3343 **E:** Kelly.dean@fnqroc.qld.gov.au	**P:** 0448 852 732 **E:** t.sydes@fnqroc.qld.gov.au

Amanda Hancock Strategic Infrastructure Coordinator	Ieva Pradal Procurement Coordinator	Maria Anselmo Regional Climate Resilience Coordinator
P: 07 4044 3021 **E:** a.hancock@fnqroc.qld.gov.au	**P:** 07 4044 3684 **E:** ieva.pradal@fnqroc.qld.gov.au	**P:** 0491 960 940 **E:** m.anselmo@fnqroc.qld.gov.au

Acronyms Defined

AASB	Australian Accounting Standards Board
AER	Australian Energy Regulator
AMTC	Animal Management Technical Committee
BQ	Biosecurity Queensland
CAAP	Capability Agreement and Action Plan
CAFNEC	Cairns and Far North Environment Centre
CCRC	Cassowary Coast Regional Council
CEO's	Chief Executive Officer (member Councils)
CHAS	Coastal Hazard Adaptation Strategy
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CPI	Consumer Price Index
CRC	Cairns Regional Council
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
DAF	Dept. of Agriculture and Fisheries
DATSIP	Dept. of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships
DDG	Deputy Director General
DES	Dept. Environment and Science
DNRME	Dept. Natural resources, Mines and Energy
DSDMIP	Dept. of State Development, Tourism and Innovation
ED	Executive Director
EMQ	Emergency Management Queensland
EMS	Emergency Management Strategy
FNQROC	Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils
FNQ RRTG	Far North Queensland Regional Road and Transport Group
FNQ RRTG TC	Far North Queensland Regional Road and Transport Group Technical Committee
FNQWA	Far North Queensland Water Alliance
FY	Financial Year
GBR	Great Barrier Reef
GIS	Geographic Information System
HSC	Hinchinbrook Shire Council
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IPWEA	Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia

IPWEAQ	Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia Qld
IQRAP	Inland Queensland Road Action Plan
JCU	James Cook University
JPRS	Joint Purchasing and Resource Sharing
LAWMAC	Local Authority Waste Management Advisory Committee
LG	Local Government
LGAQ	Local Government Association of Queensland
LRRS	Local Roads of Regional Significance
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MP	Member of Parliament
NAMAC	Natural Asset Management Advisory Committee
NAQS	Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy
NCCARF	National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NWROC	North West Regional Organisation of Councils
QAO	Qld Audit Office
QPWS	Qld Parks and Wildlife Service
QTRIP	Qld Transport and Roads Investment Program
QWRAP	Qld Water Regional Alliance Program
RAMG	Regional Asset Management Group
RAV	Restricted Access Vehicle
RDA TN	Regional Development Australia – Tropical North
RECoE	Rural Economies Centre of Excellence
RILIPO	Remote Indigenous Land Infrastructure Project Officer
RTAPT	Road and Transport Alliance Project Team
RWMG	Regional Waste Management Group
SARA	State Assessment and Referral Agency
SCDF	State-wide Capability Development Fund
SOG	State Oversight Group
TIDS	Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme
TMR	Transport and Main Roads
TNQ	Tropic North Queensland
TSS	Tariff Structure Statement
TTNQ	Tourism Tropical North Queensland

ULAB	Used Lead Acid Batteries
WTMA	Wet Tropics Management Authority
YCAEP	Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Project
YEP	Your Entrepreneur Project